

St Pius & St Anthony 2nd Sunday Ordinary Year B2

'There is one in every group!' In the best sense, of course! What I mean by that is that in our gospel today, we find an apostle that it is especially helpful to know – Andrew! He is a real 'Go-to' guy! For sure, we would say that John the Baptist is that too, and then topping it off, we have to know Jesus. ***But who gets us to them***, at least in today's reading? It is Andrew! And he goes from John the Baptist (Andrew was first a disciple of John's) to Jesus.

Jesus asked a great question that I will come back to in a minute, ***"What are you looking for?"*** I can easily find those words on the lips of Andrew. (Isn't that similar to what the greatest salespeople say to us: "What do you need-If I can't get it- it has never been made, but I can work on that too for you-let's get one built for you!") Andrew, as the 'Go-to' apostle is great at making introductions, or putting together people, matching what is needed with who can meet that need. Andrew continues in this role, coming through for people throughout John's gospel. First, today we hear that Andrew, being a disciple of John, Andrew is tipped off, that Jesus is the expected lamb of God-Savior. So, ***Andrew*** encounters Jesus, and then goes off to bring in his brother Peter. John 1:41-42 says, *"Andrew first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah"Then he brought him to Jesus."* Score One for Andrew! Then later in John chapter 6 we will hear that just as Jesus prepares to miraculously multiply bread and fish, Jesus asks for some 'starter' food to prime the miracle. John 6:9 informs us that ***it is Andrew*** who finds a boy who provides the beginnings of the meal, as it says, *"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish....."* Score Two for Andrew! Then again later in John chapter 12 when there is a Jewish high holy day in Jerusalem, we hear that some 'Greeks' (aka 'Hellenists'-or Greek speakers without any Jewish background) that are interested in meeting Jesus. These Greeks reach out asking Philip first, *"Sir, we would like to see Jesus"*. But Philip turns to ***Andrew*** for help making it happen. John 12:21-22 tells us *"So, Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus."* Andrew is leading the action here after learning of the need from Philip. Score Three for Andrew. He makes the introductions, finding what needs finding and taking care of business. (Maybe this is why we hear so much more about big brother Peter with Jesus, and consistently less so about Andrew, because Andrew keeps a door open, a side gig active in the fishing business or at least sustains their contacts in the commercial circuit (maybe it is Andrew who is the one always

needing to secure the boats for transport throughout the gospels that take Jesus and the apostles back and forth across the Sea of Galilee so much). Andrew is a proven 'go-to', who always 'knows a guy', or can set it up, to get things done. Again, we '*Gotta have one of him in every group.*'

But let's get back to the great question Jesus asks, "***What are you looking for?***" (*speaking of salespersons*). What a question we should ask ourselves every day in prayer! Jesus asks it of all of us: ***What is it that we are looking for? What are we after in life? What do we look, to get out of all of this?***

A funny little note here is how Andrew and that other disciple of John ask Jesus for the small print of the deal, some additional specifics, when they ask, "*Where are you staying?*" Is this a condition of their following or not? I almost pick up a finicky sense about them. It surprises me. Maybe they just didn't know what to say. I would think that they would jump at Jesus's offer coming from John's company. We learned where John lived (in the desert), what John wore (roughing it in camel hair) and what John ate (locusts & wild honey)! I could see them quick to move on to Jesus- but they may have wondered, that if John recommends Jesus, the disciple lifestyle is going to get even more bare bones! This reminds me of the person who said to friend "I got tickets to UK but can't go, do you want them? And the other guy asks, "Where are seats?" Well he wouldn't be much of a fan, because a real fan jumps at that - doesn't matter - just to get into Rupp Arena is a blessing! But Jesus' invitation and ultimate accommodations take, because Andrew through this interaction with Jesus, he goes and convinces his big brother Peter to come meet & stay with Jesus, too.

But it is remarkable to me, how deep an impression Jesus makes on them and how uniquely He must have touched them, because John tells us that it was four in the afternoon when this encounter went down. That is not much time left in a day to have such a deep lasting effect as Jesus does upon them. That is a quick orientation, but again Jesus has that touch. And such dramatic conversion-inducing appeal is reflected further by Jesus' renaming of Peter – Peter is changed strikingly enough, that his life takes on entirely new direction reflected in a new name – it is his rebirth- He is a new person, having met Jesus.

So, thinking of Andrew and the change brought about in Peter's life as Andrew introduces Peter to Jesus, we need to ask ourselves: Who brought us to Jesus – to this moment with God? Behind every Jesus, is a John the Baptist who brought Andrew to Jesus, and behind every Simon-Peter is an Andrew. So, who made our introduction to Jesus. We need to take a moment to thank them. If it's

not possible in person, then in our prayer, thank God for them-the people who helped form our relationship to Christ. I recently heard from a friend about how she and an old classmate sought out their most influential teacher from their student days. They enjoyed a meal and an afternoon visit, and don't you know those students, let their favorite teacher know how formative and life changing her influence and interest in making them the best of students, was for their wonderful future careers! That is a precious grace to be able to revisit a past Andrew or John, a teacher or someone who put us in touch with what we were looking for! So, maybe we should all thank a teacher today because of our gospel! *(reminds me of the old bumper sticker that said, "If you can read this, thank a teacher" but I saw one recently that makes the next step too, and it read, "If you are following Jesus as closely as you are following me, then you are going to be okay!" Our gospel today reminds us that whoever and however we were introduced to Jesus, afterward we need to STAY with Him!)*

I can think of two great scripture teachers, God rest their souls, who introduced me to the Living Word of Jesus. I thank them in God. So maybe we can all take a moment today to thank God for the John and Andrew in our lives!